SW HR

6/24/72

Dear Sylvia,

Howard phoned me Thursday night, on the mission he had undertaken for you and, as it later developed, with another concern on which he began by saying he had sent me a letter. With regard to the former, long ago I attempted to enagge in a dialogue with each and every one I thought might have some interest, including you. None wanted to, none did. Hence I have no argument or evidence from anyone to consider, no basis from anyone to alter the opinion I then held. Nor has anything happened of which I have learned independently to alter my views. They are, in fact, fortified because what impends now fits into a different scheme of things, the heat of an election and the needs of an even more corrupt government.

Implicitly or explicitly Howard seemed to be asking my opinion on what he should do. My response then was to tell him that each had to decide for himself what at any time he considers right and proper. I amplified this in a letter I had to write him yesterday, and in neither the phone conversation nor the letter did I argue with him about the position he knows I hold. We none of us have a monopoly on rectitude or error, which is one of the reasons I undertake to get the opinions of those who would not give them on my view of the plans and views of others on the first matter.

After we had talked for a while, Howard decided that he should tell me what he had written. Unfortunately for his relations with others, he failed to tell me that he wanted me to keep it confidential. That I did not learn until his letter arrived. I was late getting my mail yesterday, when it did come, partly because of the weather and partly because I wanted to complete what I was working on with as little interruption as possible. We have one mail delivery a date. It is at best uncertain in time and I had to estimate delay from the torrent and the local flooding. When I do not drive into town, I go out at any time beginning 6 a.m. and get the morning paper and then put into my mailbox my outgoing mail. When our mail is delivered is the only time outgoing mail is picked up.

As soon as I finished talking to Howard and after discussing it with my wife, who had overheard part of my end of the conversation, I wrote Gary and Jerry breaking off with them, asking them not to write me again or to come here again. I sent Howard a copy. I have regarded these three as I would sons. Each has come here as often as he would or could, each has always had free and unsupervised access to all my files, with each I have pointed out new things I had acquired, and all understood what I wanted held confidential. That <u>either</u> Gary or Jerry would do what they did would have seemed an impossibility to me. You can understand how I feel, I presume, on learning that <u>both</u> did, and that Jerry had been down after doing it and without telling me. None of this was secret from Jerry. He had seen it and other things here. Gary is one of two with whom, in strictest confidence, I had deposited copies of the death certificate as soon as I got it. I have followed this practise on everything of any importance I have ever gotten, infrequently with unpleasant results. But those unpleasantness did not end my sharing and securing duplicate deposits.

I have long been aware of the snide remakrs, probably many fewer than were passed, about my alleged secretiveness. In those case where I know the source, I have questions about why the source would say any such thing. Nothing could be farthur from the truth. There is no critic who has ever been here who has not had free access to my entire files, and aside from what is in the cellar, this means 10 cabinets in my office. If there is a single reporter who was ever here who did not, I can't think of it. On each occasions I have sought to background in confidence. The attitude toward me and my work on the working level is not that of the policy boys in the media. No reporter has yet breached my confidence. Mary, in fact, when she was here, never ceased chiding me for my openness and what, in retrospect, I must agree has been carelessness. Many of my files have been borrowed and not returned. I can't remember who has them or some of the books that have disappeared the same way. Howard will tell you that rather than being overly secretive, I have given or loaned him large cardboard boxes full of files, the choice of whether he keeps or returns them being his. Within the past several months, I have given away the entire research for a book, as Jerry knows. Jerry is a slob with files. He borrows things, sometimes returns them, never refiles them, and usually is so self-indulgent he doesn't even indicate the file from which he has taken things. This makes needless work and problems for him and he will tell you that I have told him unless he can be orderly he will no again get anything. Now, of course, I have told him never to come here. Burdensome as this rotten dishonesty is for me, it is

worse and close to intolerable for my wife, who suffers too much from being married to me. None of you will ever understand the pain and enormous work Ned required of us, or her great suffering at the course he finally took. One had to be here to get even a glimmer of that mind's strange workings, that hidden by sick ego and ambition or a mentally-ill man, something I didn't detect until close to 3 a.m. one morning he disclosed it. Gary knew about his problems. If I took Ned on Gary's recom mendation, I have to admit that after his first visit we liked him and would have accepted him on the impression he then made.

Now on these vile slanders on my alleged secretiveness, let me give you a few specific examples. From the time we first met, you have had a standing invitation to come here, for a weekend or for a vacation, and to see what you would. If you are well within your rights in going where you chose and not going where you don't want to, it is not in any way my fault. During this time, aside from vacations (and how I wish we could get one for even a week!), I know you have gone to Vancouver, Los Angeles and Dallas, for these I recall. You have gone to Philadelphia several times, and the train trip to Baltimore is but an hour longer. I had offered to meet you at the railroad station and any airport, each another hour. Jerry would have given you transportation any of the many weekends he has been here.

So, there is nothing I have that you would not have seen if you had not elected otherwise. Those things that people ask me to keep confidential are all marked, some in separate files so labelled. This would have been the only restriction imposed except for the keeping confidential of that I planned to use in my own writing. As you know, this is but the norm. When I completed much of this writing, I promptly loaned you copies. You are not alone. Cyril, for example, read the then-completed parts of POST MORTEM, as did Nichols, both promising to keep the contents confidential until I could arrange printing. I have, in fact, also made copies available to a fairly large number of those who have requested it, ranging from individuals in some cases total strangers to institutions. Most of the xeroxing has been done for me by Hoch, so the extent of this is not secret. With Cyril I went further and on his word that he would keep it confidential I kept him informed of my work on the final part of PM. On the death certificate, I immediately told him what it disclosed on his promise to keep it confidential.

I digress for a moment on Cyril. As soon as I could, I personally made the xerox copies of the panel report and related papers for him and for Nichols in New Orleans, the Monday after the Friday on which we got them. Al Oser, now the judge, mailed them for me to save me the postage. Even then Cyril did not begin to understand what it says. So, I undertook to explain it to him by phone. I actually phoned him at his home. He was in Las Vegas. He phoned me back from there (reversing the charges, naturally, which is consistent with his thoughtlessness in not paying for the xeroxing of the GSA-family contract when he knew his way around so little or was so niggardly that he didn't even ask the Archives for it) and I went into detail in explainig to this truly eminent forensic pathologist what he had not seen and understood even after I had sent him a copy. I have had occasion to review my Cyril file recently. It was a depressing experience you may be unwilling to credit, but I am not withdrawing my invitation and you can determine for yourself if I represent faithfully. I rather imagine that Howard has gone over it. I have never watched any critic in his use of my files nor have I ever asked any one which he was using, so I don't know. I do know that Howard was into that subject when he was here, for he expressed his shock after reading theparts of my Ned file that Ned had not sent him, beginning with Ned's first offer and including the contract. You should also know that Ned left here with whatever he wanted, on promise of confidentiality and that part of our contract was that he would speak to none of those he wanted to without my prior agreement. Ned has strange notions of his own omniscience based on a reading of a couple of book and the fact that he inherited wealth. I also sent Cyril pictures nobody had seen that I got. He made copies. So, with this aspect, there has been no secrecy. And even the stuff that Garrison used was mine. That his office didn't keep its word on their part of it will, I am sure, not surprise you, but we did have a specific arrangement and such things as 100% of the medical stuff ware 100% mine. You never understood the relationship between me and Garrison and as far back as perhaps 1967 wouldn't listen to any explanation if you had to keep any of it confidential.

As you know, I gave Cyril his testimony in Judge Halleck's court. That his performance on his own was truly magnificent, especially under cross-examination, is irrelevant. He got the entire basis of his factual testimony from me after failing to understand it himself. There were special problems at that time which impelled me to tape that and other things. Nobody has ever heard those tapes. You can. The problem was Vince and his Svebgali role, as you should remember. (You should also remember your indifference about Vince when I first told you in 1967 what he had then done. Ditto for Arnoni.) There were, in fact, at least two such phone calls that I can recall, neither at Cyril's expense. The second was a conference setup on a Sunday, with Vince, Bud, a friend of Vinces, the basketballer who thereby became an assassination expert among those I can recall. To this day Cyril has never accepted the repeated invitation to come here with his wife and to this day he has given me absolute zero. He gave me some copies of a picture I loned him in confidence, having, apparently, also made some for himself. He originally promised to help me with my suit for pictures of the clohting and in other medical-related matters, but even when I had to act as my own attorney in that case and asked him to be an expert witness for me, he refused, with sufficent honesty and bluntness to give me the reason: it would cost him money! The one other thing I had asked of him, xeroxes of a couple of pages from standard sources he must have on the capabilities and limitations of spectrographic analysis and neutron-activation testing he promised and never supplied. I wrote him a number of times to remind him of this, and each time he did reply he told me in one form or another how great I am, how tragic it is for the critical community that I have to be so depparately broke, things like that, not the simple cpuple of xeroxes one of his secretaries could have made at little or no cost or trouble.

With you I was not secretive. There were some things that had to be confidential. For example, your involvement with Thornley (and you would not listen to my warnings on Lifton, would you, or tell me of his nasty lies he was broadcasting about me-so who is secretive between us?) that could have and still can be a great embarrassment for you. Your passion (as is) uncontrolable as it is eloquent and beautiful to behold. With Thornley, as I think you will eventually come to understand, it was entirely unthinking. He forced me to investigate him. I actually tried to help him keep out of probable trouble, and not because I found him either attractive or a decent man by any standard. The results of that investigation are enough to put him in jail. This and your lack of control when anyone mentioned anything even indirectly related to Garrison are what impelled me to ask that you keep what I would tell you confidential.

As a general comment on me and the lies about my secretiveness, I tell you as others can and I am sure will confirm, that until it became financially impossible I made copies of eadh and every document I got at the Archives for at least two people with all and for more with some. Now aside from each taking a full minute or more on my machine and the time of correlating and mailing (and even stamps are a financial burden for us when we have no income and enormous debts) the actual cost to me was 10¢ for each page. And this has nothing to do with buying cooies of things they wanted and I dug up for them at the Archives when it cost 20¢ a page and the cost of going there came to more than $10.00 a trip. Often, of course, this was not the real cost, for I did other things. In some cases when I was told my costs would be paid they were not and in some I had to keep writing letters, a waste of time I could have devoted to work. A case of the latter is the study I made of the Oswald shirt for Jones Harris. That was a special trip. It took months before I got back the cost of the color pictures I got for him, $40.00, and even then, when he was making extra prints of everything, he never sent me a duplicate.

As a specific comment on secretiveness between you and me, you did accept information from others before and after refusing to from me. Epstein is the first case. And after other things Forman is another. You judgement there was pretty bad for that was a stinker and you should have detected it. Perhaps your devotion to Tink blinded you. He takes Tink, even third-hand, as oracular. The result of your keeping that confidence was a courtroom disaster mitigated in part only because I saw the papers Bud filed a few minutes before he had to be in court with them. Read Forman on the stand and you'll see enough. In the courtroom, when you could see all the faces, his, the judge's, the U.S.attorneys', it was much worse. That confidence on trash you did not detect you could and would keep, but none of t ose with which I wanted to trust you, including what I am sure I told you it was in your personal interest to know,

Between those to whom I sent cooies in confidence, those who saw it here and those I told about it, everyone who can still be considered even possibly a responsible critic saw or knew the contents of the death certificate -except you - and that was YOUR election. Remember, I even asked you if you would read the final part of POST MORTEM. It is in there and its use IS copyrighted. You were too busy. Budy I know you are, but it seems that you are busy only to the point of doing nothing with me. You have this right, naturally, but on exercising it I suggest you surrender your right to complain.

From the very beginning, from my first awareness of any critic besides Lane, who I never trusted after reading his National Guardian piece and soon enough I had better reason, I have undertaken to have everything I have written read by others. You may recall that you read WHITEWASH in the xerox edition. (And I very well recall your deliberate misdating of it in your own work, an error I called to your attention the day we lunched at the United Nations and saw the proofs you were still correcting.) I sent Maggie and Bill cooies of WWII that I can recall. Since then I have written nothing except PW that hasn't been read before printing or copyrighting by at least one other critic, some as many as a half-dozen.

So, allegations of my alleged secretiveness are mythology, and I think it is long past the time when those who retail the falsehood should be asking themselves why. I am reminded of another such item. Mary has had copies of some of my files of which I have no copies. I wrote her last night, not for the first time, and asked their return. I loaned them to her before Thanksgiving last year so she could make copies for herself and Arch. And at that time I opened two new archives for us and was able to make arrangements for her, acting as my confidential secretary, to go over them and get free copies of whatever seemed worthwhile. I have heard not a word from her on this. I know she had health and family problems, but that is not seven months ago. I loaned her other pages I had gotten so she could copy. I still await my copy. The same is true of confidential sources I was able to tap. It is not improper to dictate notes of a confidential nature to a secretary, and thus I was able to without dishonesty let Mary know what I had learned in Dallas a sufficient commentary on those who lived there and hab been there earlier- by her agreeing to act as my confidential secretary.

You are among those quoted as criticizing me for this alleged secretiveness. This letter requires no response, and I do not propose to take this kind of time in the future. If I have to be isolated from everyone else to work, that I will do. I have been isolated from the first in terms of any significant help, but I have not been isolated in terms of helping others. This includes you. At the ABA meeting in 1967 I offered to work free and without mention of my own work to promote your book and Maggie's. I had seen neither. And even that whore Epstein, having taken your appraisal of his work, before I read it I helped Viking because that whore is also lazy and wouldn't do it. This was the end of May 1966, before I saw his book, pub date of which was as I recall 5/31. Matter of fact, the man I then helped is no longer with Viking, remembers this, and came up to me at the ABA meeting the fifth of this month. You heard me offer Sauvage, a competitor, all my files. I did help with one appearance of us. What he did in return I don't propose to go into, but it is anything except what I would have expected of him and was in one of two bad cases a pretty lousy thing to do. Lane? I abandoned my second book and went to California to get Liebeler off his back (and did) at Maggie's and Bill's importuning. Bill put me up. Other than that, the wealthy Fields could not even reimburse my actual plane fare. I am still paying interest on it. I think these are sufficient illustrations. But to return to what I recognize may be erroneous complaints attributed to you, if they are not erroneous, I'd welcome a legitimate complaint about my being so dastardly secretive.

I am entitled to the fruit of my own labor. This concept does not originate with me. I do not like seeing my work and mine alone in The New York Times over the signature of another, for all the world as though it was the work of the signatory. I do not, as a matter of fact, want my work used by any other without my permission (and requests have been granted). The trouble is that just about everybody has quit and everybody has what is understandable, ambition. The choice is not a new one. One does his own work or respects

the rights of others to their own work. There is more work behind the getting of that death certificate, for example, than in a difficult book. Likewise there was more work in the clothing/pix suit in which Cyril promised to help and then refused to than in a book. The papers I filed, which do make an official record, are book-length. Now if there is any ethical, moral or legal reason you can think of for my not having the right to use my own work, I'd welcome it. Especially if it is used by those who could have helped with this work but not only failed to, refused to.

If the critical community is so concerned about my work being available, it has no problem. It includes those who could well afford to lend me the money to get it printed. If I can't assure the financial success of a book today, I can tell you that much money as I owe, about $35,000, a not inconsiderable sum for which my home is security and I am without income, I don't owe a penny to a single critic. From this same community, there is more than $2,000 owing me. (Not counting what crooked publishers and wholesalers and bookstores owe and will not pay because they know the cost of suing is greater than the return can justify. But from crooked businessmen this is less unacceptable tyan from those of lofty pretensions.) In my view, which I recognize is subject to being called selfish, especially by those with the means of making this work available and in a context lacking when it is stolen and used, when those who claim dedication to truth and to exposing what should be exposed have this capability and elect not to do it, they surrender any right to complain against me. I think it is they, not I, who bear the responsibility for this work not being generally available.

This is not the kind of letter I decided to write when I was driving my wife home from grocery shopping this a.m. But I have been hearing all sorts of nastiness for too long and what now impends is capable of doing me too great a hurt for me to be silent any longer. I don't know what I may be able to do to protect my rights, but I do know that if there is anything within my capability I will attempt it. If there is nothing that under my circumstances I can do, I will not forget it and will hope for the generosities of time. I regard the selfishness and self-seeking as that of those who have been saying these nasty things about me behind my back. Any one could have elected the poverty I enjoy to achieve what I have. All have elected the comforts of life instead. Many could have helped this work without feeling the cost and enough have wasted more than the cost in self-seeking futilities and hurtful stupidities.

Because he undertook to write them, many, including you, knew about Ned and us having an agreement. In fact, he said he sent you a copy of at least one of his one-sided rewritings of it. Yet when you would not accept confidences from me designed to prevent hurt to you, from what I have been informed you did accept confidences from Ned with every reason to believe and understand his purpose was to hurt me. And the certainty that it could. With just POST MORTEM alone can you begin to imagine the effort in it, the cost, the pain, the sacrifice of all those many thing so many others were enkoying (and, of course, had every right to enjoy). If you do not know it to be the fact, you have every reason to suspect that he has violated our contract, again with hurt a probability to us. And on this you are as you have been silent. While I hear these complaints about my alleged secretiveness.

I know you and your magnificent passion well enough to expect that your initial reaction to this may be anger. I encourage you to let it pass and try and think as detached people would. You know me well enough to know that I work all the time, still a too-long day, and that each thing I do is at the cost of something else. I haven't even mowed the grass here in three weeks, aside from assassination work. Sometimes, in haste, I am too emotional, make careless errors other than in typing. So if I have, please try and separate those. My purpose is not to fight. Nor is it to lay a basis for what I will not eschew if it becomes necessary in the future, to fight then. There have long been too many divisions among the few of us who ever had serious intent. I think it is past time for us all to do some deep sould-searching. I have done it periodically, as I think Howard can attest, for we have discussed it. My regrets at this mess are great and sincere. But I regard myself as the victim, not the cause, and I do assert my right to my own work. With hope the future can be less unpleasant if not better,

ccHR